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(12) **United States Patent**
Kumar et al.

(10) **Patent No.:** US 6,278,993 B1

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(54) **METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR EXTENDING AN ON-LINE INTERNET SEARCH BEYOND PRE-REFERENCED SOURCES AND RETURNING DATA OVER A DATA-PACKET-NETWORK (DPN) USING PRIVATE SEARCH ENGINES AS PROXY-ENGINES**

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* cited by examiner

(*) **Notice:** Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

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(22) **Filed:** Feb. 3, 2000

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A search function is provided for Internet searching capable of searching to greater depth than conventional search functions. The new function tests returned electronic documents from a first search for a second search function, and, finding a second function, transfers at least a form of first search criteria into the second search function, then initiated the second function, and returns at least addresses of documents found by the second function into the first function. In a preferred embodiment a search function according to the invention is provided by a subscription portal server, and operates by proxy, initiated and controlled by subscribers. In this form, primary searches may be limited to destinations registered to specific subscribers using the function.

Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation-in-part of application No. 09/323,598, filed on Jun. 1, 1999, which is a continuation-in-part of application No. 09/208,740, filed on Dec. 8, 1998.

(51) **Int. Cl.**⁷ G06F 15/00; G06F 17/30

(52) **U.S. Cl.** 707/3; 707/501; 707/5

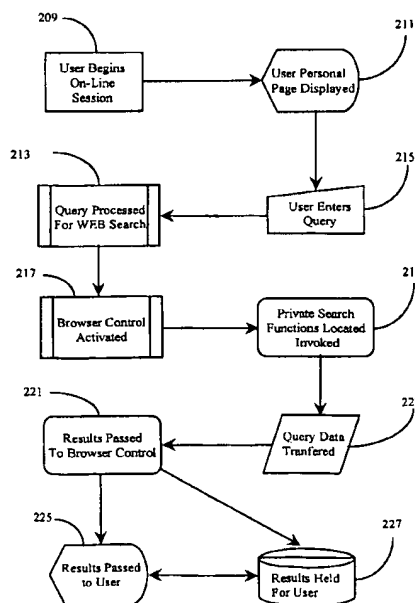
(58) **Field of Search** 707/1-10, 100-104, 707/500-534; 345/326-335; 709/200-217

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11 Claims, 11 Drawing Sheets



US-PAT-NO: 6278993

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 6278993 B1

TITLE: Method and apparatus for extending an on-line internet search beyond pre-referenced sources and returning data over a data-packet-network (DPN) using private search engines as proxy-engines

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Abstract Text - ABTX (1):

A search function is provided for Internet searching capable of searching to greater depth than conventional search functions. The new function tests returned electronic documents from a first search for a second search function, and, finding a second function, transfers at least a form of first search criteria into the second search function, then initiated the second function, and returns at least addresses of documents found by the second function into the first function. In a preferred embodiment a search function according to the invention is provided by a subscription portal server, and operates by proxy, initiated and controlled by subscribers. In this form, primary searches may be limited to destinations registered to specific subscribers using the function.

TITLE - TI (1):

Method and apparatus for extending an on-line internet search beyond pre-referenced sources and returning data over a data-packet-network (DPN) using private search engines as proxy-engines

Detailed Description Text - DETX (44):

FIG. 4 is a block diagram illustrating a summarization software agent 67 and various capabilities and layers thereof according to an embodiment of the present invention. Summarization agent 67, hereinafter termed gatherer 67, is a programmable and interactive software application adapted to run on a network server. Gatherer 67 may, in one embodiment, be integrated with portal software 35 of FIG. 1 and be provided in the form of a software module separate from

agent 39 (FIG. 2). In another embodiment, gatherer 67 may be a part of **agent** 39 as an enhancement to the function of that **agent** as previously described. In still another embodiment, gatherer 67 may be provided as a parent or **client-side** application controlled by a separate service from the portal service described above.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (61):

Alternatively, if a user requests a summary about data on one of his sites such as, perhaps, current interest rates and re-finance costs at his mortgage site, the service may at it's own discretion provide an additional unsolicited summary from an alternate mortgage site for comparison. This type of summarization would be designed to enhance a user's position based on his profile information. In this case, updated data about latest interest rates, stock performances, car **prices**, airline ticket discounts, and so on would be stored by the service for comparative purposes. If a user request for a summary can be equaled or bettered in terms of any advantage to the user, such summary data may be included.